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The Journal of
**LIBERAL
RELIGION**

This Issue—

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**CHRISTIAN FAITH
and UNITY
AN EDITORIAL**

**And statements by
H. Faber and
J. E. Ledden**

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Christian Faith and Unity

AN EDITORIAL

We publish in this issue of LIBERAL RELIGION two unsolicited statements from widely separated sources bearing on the problem of Christian faith and unity. They deserve more detailed attention than our editorial space permits, but this method of announcing their presence to our readers may serve to evoke a fuller discussion for future issues.

The first statement came from Prof. J. L. Ledden, of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Vermont, and deals with what might be called a basic platform upon which Protestants might conceivably come together. The second statement came from Mr. H. Faber of Holland, speaking for *The International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom*. By-passing the thorny economic and political issues of the hour, it concerns itself with a re-statement of religious faith in words and phrases reminiscent of ancient Christian consolations which were offered during and after every social catastrophe.

Dr. Ledden suggests that "belief in the Bible," "belief in Christ" and "belief in God" are alike unavailable as ultimate bases of Christian unity. Should this come as a shock to many Christians who have long regarded themselves as "liberal," we suggest that they ponder the implications of Dr. Faber's statement. If Dr. Ledden goes too far—and I do not think that he does—may it not still be said that whereas Dr. Faber and his associates may speak for European liberalism, they certainly do not speak for American liberalism. One young student in this country, on a scholarship from Holland, made the confident assertion early during his visit, that religious liberalism in his homeland, many hundred thousand strong (I deliberately understate his own estimate), was "identically the same thing as Unitarianism in America." The present statement is a strong indication that

the young scholar's initial appraisal was as superficial as it was hasty. There may be Universalists and Unitarians in America who would accept the Faber statement as expressing their own faith, but the overwhelming majority would probably reject it as wholly unsatisfactory. Must Christians still assert that they cannot see their lives except "in the light of the coming of Christ"? Must they supplement their confession to pessimism with regard to this world with the unqualified assertion that "there is also another world" which they know to be "the true one"? And if such assertions are called for as evidence of our continuing faith, precisely how much consolation will they bring to those victims of hunger and cold and every other form of physical deprivation? If this adequately expresses the kind of religious insight which is coming out of the liberal elements of continental Europe then the religious situation there is indeed tragic beyond all words.

Having said that, however, and turning now to the conditions of unity which Prof. Ledden lays down for American Protestantism, precisely where does that leave *us*? With the doors of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ tightly shut against Unitarians and Universalists, it is impossible to predict in any foreseeable future that the Ledden proposal could find even a single sponsor who could as much as bring it to the floor of the Council meetings. Entirely aside from economic and institutional problems which thwart so many efforts at unity, the mere attempt to introduce *certain elements of Christian ethics, the awe, fear and reverence of nature, and the methodology of the Protestant approach*, as over against the content of Protestant articles of faith, would be defeated before it could be brought forward.

Theoretically and historically, of course, Prof. Ledden's position is unassailable. One cannot refute his claim that it is not in the realm of belief that Protestant unity should be sought, and that Protestantism's very essence "is a denial of any authority above the individual's highest grasp." Nevertheless, if American Protestantism should by some process now impossible to conceive, live up to this high concept of truth-seeking, it would cease to be Protestant in any

traditional Christian sense. It would become a new thing in the world—a great new religious venture—and it would require a new name to distinguish it from its historic stream, precisely as Christianity once required its new name to distinguish it from its origins.

We can think of no more devastating testimony to the bankruptcy of traditional Christianity than these two statements, side by side: One repeating the words and phrases of a world concept which has long ceased to exist, and the other, setting forth simple intellectual and spiritual conditions of human togetherness which — after two thousand years—the weight of Christian tradition and its doctrinal mind-set would still overwhelmingly reject.

Edwin T. Buehrer

Humanistic Theism

By GARDNER WILLIAMS

God and the supreme being are not the same thing. Indeed, they are poles apart. One is, spiritually speaking, at the top of life, while the other, metaphorically speaking, is at the bottom. There could be nothing higher than God, the ultimate or highest good, and there could be nothing lower than the supreme being, which underlies everything.

True religion is humanistic. The essential element in it is an active devotion to the ideal of man's highest good. This devotion is properly called the love of God. Another element in religion, not so essential, is a pious gratitude to the omnipotent supreme being or substantial core of nature. God and the supreme being are not the same thing. Indeed they are poles apart. One is, spiritually speaking, at the top of life, while the other is, metaphorically speaking, at the bottom. There could be nothing higher than God, the ultimate or highest good, and there could be nothing lower than the supreme being, which underlies everything.

This theology may properly be called *humanistic or ideal theism*. It drops the fictions, superfluities and primitive survivals of traditional religion, and reaffirms those ancient truths and mature insights which have been the heart of genuine religion in all ages. Humanistic theism is almost wholly continuous with our great theological traditions. Every rational value enshrined in these is preserved in it. If a person were to change over to it from the old or the new orthodoxy he would be taking only a little step, intellectually considered. Of course the spiritual and institutional significance of this venture might be tremendous. He might stop worshipping evil and he might develop a more discriminating attitude toward an ancestral religious institution.

I think that religious humanists have not usually made their continuity with past culture sufficiently clear. They have been too vividly aware of their new departures. Also, some have been too negative. They have not fully realized how many traditional factors they were retaining and, by implication, affirming, in their actual religious attitudes and

practices. Chiefly, they have omitted to mention God and the supreme being. Impressed with ancient theological errors regarding these two essential elements, humanists have proposed a religious ideology minus either one.

I shall attempt to restate the humanistic position in religion, making explicit its real assumptions and its linkage with past culture, and using theological terms in their traditional meanings—but not in all of their traditional meanings. Dropping out what is discredited by honest criticism and by rational evidence, I can still use the accepted terminology with a residual meaning which is true and important.

The supreme being or ultimate reality or substantial core of nature is God, the Father, the source of all dependent being, the creator of man, and the proper object of religious piety or gratitude. The supreme ideal of man's highest good is God, the Holy Spirit. The word "spirit" is traditionally somewhat vague. It may mean an attitude of devotion to some ideal or it may mean the ideal to which a rational being is devoted. God, the Holy Spirit, or supreme ideal of man's highest good, is that ideal of the perfection of life which is glimpsed in the imagination in moments of insight, though never fully realized in actual practice and in substantial existence. It is the final standard of all evaluation and the proper object of all rational striving and of all religious aspiration.

Man's Highest Good Never Actually Attained

Both the supreme being, and the idea, concept, or ideal of man's highest good, are real. Man's highest good itself, of course, is not. It is never actually attained, and it can never be attained in so intractable a universe as this. But the idea of it is a real idea or ideal. Both the supreme being and this ideal are not only real but are also tremendously significant. Religion must not ignore either one. Traditional theology accepts both. Humanism accepts both. Humanism derived the notion of them from orthodoxy. Most of religious humanism is borrowed from orthodoxy. But humanism makes a significant denial. It denies one of the clauses in orthodoxy which is erroneously thought by many

people to state the true essence of all valid religion. This clause asserts the identity of God and the supreme being in one spiritual substance. Humanism insists, for the sake of truth and of intellectual and moral integrity, that the ultimately real and the ultimately ideal are two distinct things. If the ultimate reality were also the ultimate principle of the highest good, no evil could exist. But, as experience teaches, and as Schopenhauer and John Stuart Mill and others have specifically pointed out, genuine evils abound in this vale of tears.

The ultimately real has been called God, the Father. But it would be better to call this simply the supreme being. Let us save the holy word "God" for that which is the object of man's final devotion and which is so different in its basic principle, and in many of its characteristics, from the supreme being. God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and truth.

Man's duty is, of course, to make the real as nearly ideal as possible. Man ought to bring these things together as much as he can; but he will never be able wholly to unite them. Moreover, even if he ever did make them coincide, they would still be basically different in principle, one exemplifying the principle of *what is*, and the other that of *what ought to be*.

Nature's "Underlying Principle of Continuity"

That there is a supreme being has been denied. Some sceptics think that there is no substantial core of the universe, no permanent substratum, no underlying independent being or reality with identity and continuity through time. Perhaps not; we cannot be absolutely certain about it. I nevertheless believe that there is an underlying principle of continuity which keeps nature uniform, and that natural law would not be what it is without a substance. The term "substance" is properly defined as that which exists independently and possesses some continuity or identity through time. If there were no underlying substance in nature, then the experiential surface, not depending upon anything else, would be independent, and *it* would be the substance of things. It would possess intrinsically the continuity and uniformity

which we can see that it has.

But I think that the experiential surface is not the whole story. It does not seem to me to be the kind of thing that keeps nature uniform. Experience or consciousness depends directly, for its nature and existence, upon the structure and functioning of the neurones, which depend for their nature upon certain protein molecules, which would be nothing except for the atoms which make them up, which atoms are forms of functioning electrons and protons, which, in turn, are forms of something else, which is probably a form of something else, etc. Perhaps this series is infinite, but I doubt it. I think that there is a final term or factor, which is absolute being or the ultimate nature of things, on which everything else depends, either directly or indirectly. Modern physics indicates that this may best be described as something like structured energy; but one should not dogmatize with much confidence as to its exact nature. Whatever sort of thing it is, it has produced every created thing. The uniformity of natural law, that is, the orderliness of nature, is what suggests that it exists. Moreover it seems evident that this supreme being is omnipotent in the sense that it has done everything, either directly or indirectly. It has produced all good and all evil. It is not omnipotent in the sense that it could do anything. It could not abrogate the laws of nature, or eliminate all evil and suffering, or make a grindstone rotate in opposite directions at the same time from the same point of view. It probably has never been created and will never be destroyed. Its past series of natural causal events has probably been infinite. Its future series of natural causal events will probably be infinite.

Our knowledge of absolute existence is of course limited. Our thoughts can never penetrate to its inmost being. Our conscious experience, in which all our knowledge is located, is on the emergent outer surface of substantial reality. We cannot intuit this reality or grasp it directly. Being immediately aware only of our own emergent selves, we can know nothing about it with complete rational certainty. But we have some indirect knowledge about it. I think that we know at least what I have already asserted about it.

The uncreated absolute being has, as we have suggested, created everything else, good and bad, and therefore is, itself, instrumentally both good and bad. Whatever causes goodness, either directly or indirectly, is, to that extent, good. Whatever in any way causes evil, is, to that extent, evil. To worship the supreme being, therefore, is, in part, to worship evil. This is idolatrous. Man's final allegiance can only be given to the ideal of human perfection, to man's highest good, which is God. But, as has been indicated, *pious gratitude* is a proper spiritual attitude toward the supreme being. We may well feel grateful to it that with us things are no worse than they are. They might be. At times in the past, with various people, they have been; with some other people to-day they still are. At any future time, for anyone, they are likely to be.

The Many Forms of Piety

Piety is a rational attitude toward all causal or substantial forces, ultimate or derivative, which have given us whatever we can enjoy. There is such an attitude as piety toward one's parents, in whose complete absence we would not have had any of the joys of life; toward the nation, whose government protects us from those more rapacious racketeers that recurrently seek to muscle in; toward the culture of Western Civilization which is, in many ways, so inspiring; toward the forces and processes of cultural evolution, which have made our lives so much richer than that of *Pithecanthropus Erectus*; toward the forces and processes of biological evolution, which have made us capable of having so much more fun than a protozoa can ever have, and which have caused our cultural evolution, and toward the ultimate nature of things—the omnipotent supreme being or substance of the universe—which, either intentionally or unintentionally, has caused all of these derivative creative forces.

Piety toward the sources of our being does not commit us to the principle that these sources are morally or spiritually *perfect*. Probably they are *perfectly* law abiding in the sense that with them everything happens in accordance with the uniform laws of natural causation. Things have never happened without causes, the laws of causation have

never varied, and there have been no exceptions to these laws. Possibly the sources of our being have been *perfectly* mathematical, as Descartes and Spinoza thought, in the sense that no sound mathematical principle has ever been violated by them. And, of course, they were in fact *perfectly* adequate to produce everything which they have produced. But some of it is putrid, both literally and figuratively. In feeling and in practicing piety we have not pledged our souls to the view that whatever is, is right, or that all is for the best in this the best of all possible worlds. We do not hold that the tragic element in life is illusory. Tragedy may not be in all cases merely a disguise for a higher good. We can admit that evil is now an ultimate feature of much human experience, and that it may never be wholly eradicated. The supreme being has, either intentionally or unintentionally, created everything, both good and evil. And in spite of the evil we may properly be grateful for those benefits which we have received—so far as we have received any benefits. Our piety, then, can be genuine without our giving any approval to evil and without our practicing any intellectual insincerity.

Also it should be obvious that whether the supreme being has created everything intentionally or unintentionally is religiously irrelevant, though it may be of some interest to philosophers and of supreme importance to those who, like young children, feel lost without a trusted personal or quasi-personal protector.

While the lack of piety is an imperfection and a mark of some spiritual maladjustment, still piety is not really necessary for a good life. Nobody needs to feel grateful to the substantial core of nature if he does not want to, that is, if he does not really feel that way. On the other hand, man's active devotion to the ideal of human perfection, the second aspect of the traditional God-concept and the spiritually essential meaning of the term "God," cannot be dispensed with. If anyone does not feel this allegiance, that is, if anyone does not experience the love of God, he is inviting trouble — both for himself and for others. The existence of a civilized social order, or of any social order, depends

upon the love of God. In this sense civilization is based upon religion. If ultimate human ideals are ignored, man will live by irrational whims and passions, and institutions will disintegrate.

The Gods — Human Ideals in Every Age

Whatever else the Gods in all ages may have been, they have at least been human ideals. Osiris, the God of the Nile, was primarily the ideal of economic prosperity and security in ancient Egypt. In Greece, Aphrodite was the ideal of feminine beauty and romantic love. Hermes was the Greek ideal of successful commerce and travel. Jaweh or Jehovah expressed the militaristic ideals of the Hebrews in the early days when they were fighting the Philistines with some success. He was transformed into a God of love when, in the midst of their later humiliations, they came to idealize that gentler passion. To-day, in our somewhat monotheistic tradition it would seem that the God-concept should include the ideal of a complete and harmonious human perfection. No other element is religiously indispensable in it.

While the notion of force in the God-concept is religiously irrelevant, still it may be true. If so, the force must be recognized as limited. Unlimited or infinite force or power in a perfectly good being would destroy all the evil in the world. But the existence of real evil is obvious. John Stuart Mill argued cogently in his *Three Essays on Religion* that the power of deity must be limited. William James agreed, asserting that God was the ideal tendency in the universe. He thought that this tendency was a purposive force and that it was partly thwarted by various obstacles. George Santayana, however, has shown that the notion of force in the God-concept is spiritually superfluous (*Reason in Religion*, Scribners, 1905; pp. 90-98, 155-158, 189-194) even though it may be true in fact. Moreover it is significant that Blaise Pascal, Immanuel Kant, and William James, all of whom believed that God was a force or power of some sort in the universe, nevertheless admitted that the existence of this force could not be proved by any rational interpretation of empirical evidence. Its existence cannot, of course, be disproved either.

To-day, many otherwise very enlightened people stick to the worship of force in one form or another; and many appear to think of nothing else when they speak of deity. They will not often admit that anything would be left of the idea of God if the notion of force should be eliminated from it. Invariably, however, the use of the God-concept in practice implies, also, some sort of ideal. This appears in the history of religion, as has been indicated, where every God was partially an ideal. It is shown by the fact that the rigidly orthodox always interpret atheism to mean a complete lack of standards or ideals, and by their preposterous arguments to "prove" that God is omnipotent in this world of sin and grief. Though logic perish, the ideality of God must be maintained.

God Is Not Omnipotent

Probably most people who say that they attribute omnipotence to God, do not hold this view consistently. Usually they do not think that he has caused evil or that he could bring man up to the highest levels of spiritual achievement without man's having free-will and occasionally making some evil choices. Possibly they think that he did or could do everything except these. Nevertheless, just one exception is enough to eliminate omnipotence. Thus it would appear that most people agree with Mill and James in admitting some limitations to God's power; and in all ages most men have admitted as much, at least by implication. The Gods, in addition to being ideals, have almost always been thought of as finite forces within the universe, not as the absolute existence or the supreme being of the whole universe.

This age-old theism of limited force is perfectly compatible with ideal or humanistic theism. The two have gone hand in hand throughout human history. The supposed conflict between humanism and popular theism should be recognized as fictitious. Humanistic or ideal theism is the heart of all spiritually respectable theism. It has been the true essence of the religions which men have lived by in all ages. Humanists are theists. What they reject is supernaturalism and the idolatrous worship of force.

Religious Toleration in Colony of Maryland

By RICHARD B. CARLETON

Religious toleration in Maryland seems to have been the gift of a man ahead of his time. The Roman Catholic Church has never really practiced it. The Quakers did later, but in those Puritan-Presbyterian times the people were fighting for a definite freedom of worship for themselves which they thought right for everyone.

Lord Baltimore might have been a fair man to live with. At least it seems to have been due to his conservative loyalty to his religion—tempered with common sense about what to do for Catholics during the rise of Puritanism in England—that led him to establish the colony of Maryland with such astute directions for avoiding religious conflicts. The colonists did not entirely avoid them, but it was due primarily to Cecil Calvert's directions that Maryland is noted in colonial history for its sincere attempts at religious toleration. The English Catholics found a place of refuge probably less troublesome than England. Other groups could worship as they pleased. Puritans, driven out of Virginia, came in and were given a place. Many Friends (Quakers) settled here before William Penn founded his colony. Through it all—and none of the groups could be trusted to be fair to others, so high was religious feeling in those days—it was the Lord Proprietors themselves who insisted on toleration and equal treatment for all.

This begins with the first paragraph of Lord Baltimore's Instructions to the Colonists before they sailed in 1633. Since Baltimore was a Catholic most of his gentry friends making the trip to be colonists were also Catholics. Other yeomen and servants were Protestants, but in his first words Calvert expressly commands that no annoyance of any kind be suffered by the Protestants and that the rites of Catholicism be observed as privately as possible in order "to preserve unity and peace." His instructions end with a paragraph stating "That in fine they bee very careful to do justice to every man."

Governor Calvert, brother of Cecil, and his commissioners,

leaned over backward to be fair. They had astute political reasons for being so, considering the state of affairs in England at the time. (Charles I was still king but sitting on the throne precariously). In 1638 a certain William Lewis, a Roman Catholic, told his Protestant servants they could not read certain books in his house. Evidently the servants were obnoxious about it, but at the trial before three Roman Catholics Lewis was convicted and fined for interfering in religious exercises, on the basis of a proclamation issued by Lord Baltimore himself! A similar case turned out the same way in 1642.

Even Jesuits Were Allowed

A Jesuit mission was a feature of the colony from the beginning. Baltimore was not lacking in courage of his convictions in allowing this, for Jesuits were not wanted in England, Father White himself, who was the first Jesuit leader, having left England for France because of conditions there. Here again it turns out that the Proprietor is the one who must insist that the others live up to his rules, for in 1642 there was a controversy over the right of the church to accept land from the Indians contrary to Baltimore's charter. Father White contended that the church had that priority over the state and that the people agreed to it, whereupon Lord Baltimore appealed to the "Congregation de Propaganda Fide" at Rome for recall of the Jesuits—or agreement with his statutes!

The Jesuits confined themselves mostly to a mission to the Indians although they were quite willing to welcome heretics back into the church. Father White's account of the first mass said in Maryland, with its setting up of a huge cross is dramatic; but it is typical of the times that he found he could not completely trust the Protestant interpreters. In 1640 one of the Indian "emperors" was baptized a Catholic. The Jesuits treated the Indians more as fellow human beings than any of the plain colonists did, and now we can say that it was through their work that the Indians were so friendly. The priests did what they could, observing the sacraments, converting a few Protestants and probably losing some Catholics.

They had their troubles; but their idea of justice was just as medieval as that of the Puritans in New England. When White heard of what happened to one Indian who resisted his efforts at conversion he saw the man's later troubles as God's just dealings with such people—and his own revenge! A certain Captain Richard Ingle took Father White in chains to England, where he was arrested because he was a Jesuit Father but inasmuch as he had come by force the case was dismissed.

Puritans Balk at Liberty of Conscience

The real contest over religious liberty and toleration begins in 1648, immediately after Charles I was beheaded and the Puritan-Presbyterians took over the British government. Again it is the "Right Honourable Cecilius, Lord Baron of Baltimore" who did something about it. His reasons were obviously expedient. Putting in a Protestant as Governor, and a majority of Protestants on the Council, he also changed the oath of the governor to include the words,

And I do further swear I will not by my selfe, nor any other person directly, trouble, molest, or discountenance any person whatsoever in the said province professing to beleve in Jesus Christ, and in particular no Roman Catholic. . . .

And thereby hangs a tale! This was in 1648, and at the same time the Oath of the Counsellor required much the same defense of anyone in the exercise of his religion providing it were Christian. In 1649 the legislature passed the famous Religious Toleration Act guaranteeing all who "profess to beleve in Jesus Christ" the right to the free exercise of their religion along with stringent prohibitions against blasphemy of any kind (including "the blessed Virgin Mary," etc. and "Heretick, Schismatick, Idolater, Puritan, Presbyterian," etc.) It is a matter of record that this can be attributed to neither Roman Catholic or Protestant votes in the assembly.

The "troublesome time" which followed, therefore, was due to political chicanery which preyed upon the old fear of "Polish religion." Richard Bennett and William Claibourne got themselves named Commissioners of Parliament and, deciding that Royalist Baltimore was definitely out, proceeded to oust his governor, Stone, and set up Puritan rule.

Puritans, whom Stone had invited to settle in Maryland from Virginia, ungraciously and without reason petitioned Bennett and Claiborne that they could not take the Oath of Allegiance required by Baltimore for possession of the land because it was not agreeable to their consciences. Actually the oath guaranteed "Liberty of Conscience in point of Religion." They also said they could not agree to a government which defended "Popery and a Popish Anti-Christian Government." It must be remembered that it was the fashion of the times to speak so and that this was one of the complaints against the Stuarts in England. Bennett and Claibourne gave these people assurance of freedom (1654) and settled it by a so-called Toleration Act which expressly took away the franchise from the Roman Catholics. Feeling was strong on both sides. The Jesuit fathers were attacked, and escaped to a wilderness place in Virginia for a time. Stone and those loyal to him went to the Puritans with a small force to compel their compliance with the proprietary government, but they were defeated in the skirmish and taken prisoner. Some of the men were deliberately killed after the battle. It seemed to one writer that these Puritans could not take freedom for themselves without denying it to others. These Protestants who were not rabid Puritans and who were loyal to the proprietor signed a declaration that they enjoyed all the freedom of religion they needed. Eventually Stone was reinstated and later Fendall was governor for a time, and it was during his regime that the Toleration Act of 1649 was accepted as "perpetual."

Protestants, Papists and George Fox

For a few years there were not more than the usual disturbances such as fear of the Indians and quiet rumors that the Papists were about to massacre. The writer Alsop stated the idea of toleration in flowery language in 1666. He also mentioned that Quakers and Anabaptists were not popular. In 1667 the tobacco market became glutted with produce so that the other colonies suggested not planting for a while. The proprietors, however, refused for Maryland on the grounds that it would not be just to the small planter!

Friends settled in Maryland before 1681 when William

Penn began his colony farther north. Indeed, Maryland should be famous if only because it was here that George Fox began the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends which is still an annual event. The first one was held in 1672. Fox records how Protestants and Papists attended the meetings and were rather in sympathy with his views.

The Maryland colony had a mental war over rumors, in 1681, of Papists and Indians coming to massacre the Protestants. Josias Fendall, a former governor, was convicted, fined and banished. Hot on the heels of James Second's flight from England a certain John Coode led a Protestant revolt and suppressed Lord Baltimore's political powers. New royal governors took over and Baltimore was left with only his financial returns from the land. This is where toleration really ends and the general practice of the times takes over. The Church of England was established by the governors in 1689, and by the legislature in 1692. In 1702 another so-called Toleration Act was passed, allowing Quakers and other Protestants to enjoy their beliefs provided they supported the Anglican Church and giving no recognition to the Catholics at all. Gradually matters went worse for the Catholics. They could not erect churches, employ Catholic teachers, hold office, or vote. By 1718 all but private worship was denied to them.

Religious Toleration in Maryland seems to have been the gift of a man ahead of his times. The Roman Catholic Church has never really practiced it. The Quakers did later but in those Puritan-Presbyterian times the people were fighting for a definite freedom of worship for themselves which they thought was right for everyone. Thus toleration was begun for a time and then lost for a time. Eventually it was guaranteed in the American Constitution, but the work of the Calverts in the 17th century was a landmark that stood out as a precedent in colonial America.

The Soul of the Woman's Movement

BY RAMONA SAWYER BARTH

If my mind has become liberalized in any degree (and I think it has burst every sectarian trammel), if the theological dogmas which I once regarded as essential to Christianity I now repudiate as absurd and pernicious, I am largely indebted to James and Lucretia Mott for the change.—William Lloyd Garrison.

Lucretia Coffin Mott, born in 1793, belonged to the salt-water aristocracy of New England. The Coffin heritage was a brilliant as well as a hardy one. Tristram Coffin, Lucretia's ancestor, started a tradition of thrift and labor, of sea-faring men and resourceful women. Lucretia's childhood on Nantucket Island was one of poverty and hardship. "Yet," looking back, she writes, "these trials in early life were not without their good effect in disciplining the mind and leading it to set a just estimate on worldly pleasures. . . . The exercise of women's talents as well as the general care which devolved on them in the absence of their husbands, tended to develop and strengthen them mentally and physically."

While teaching at a Quaker school, Lucretia met James Mott, a fellow teacher. In 1811, in Philadelphia, the eighteen year old Lucretia and twenty-two year old James announced in Quaker fashion to the Friends who had gathered that henceforth, in the eyes of God, they were husband and wife. Their fifty-seven years of married life consisted of serving great causes and raising their family of six children. For the young couple with their growing brood, life was a financial struggle. Lucretia, however, made her period of childbearing one, also, of intellectual development. As she sat in a chair nursing the newest baby, she read from a ponderous volume the writings of William Penn, which she had propped up at the foot of her bed. During the numerous daily feedings she read and reread his words, memorizing the passages which appealed to her.

Lucretia felt that Quakerism could not be defined by a creed. More and more, she leaned toward the views of Elias Hicks, who was shocking Quaker circles by denying the divinity of Jesus Christ and by declaring that heaven and

hell were not fixed places, but states of mind. Hicks was regarded by some as "an emissary from the bottomless pit" but Lucretia was thrilled by his daring and challenging thoughts, his stand as a pacifist, his advocacy of women's rights and his anti-slavery views, as well as his theological convictions.

William Ellery Channing, "the Hireling Preacher"

Other great religious liberals of the day made their influence felt. Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Divinity School Address* left her deeply impressed. Brought up in the Quaker tradition, she felt that ministers who were paid for preaching the Gospel were "hirelings." It was therefore a shock to her to discover that William Ellery Channing, one of her favorite preachers, was receiving a regular salary from his congregation; but she finally concluded that the truths he taught were divine and that she should not close her ears to them. Inevitably, too, Theodore Parker's preaching came to her attention. After he had preached his *Transient and Permanent in Christianity*, Lucretia urged all her friends to get copies. Writing of this epoch-making sermon, as she at once judged it to be, she said to her friends, Richard and Hannah Webb in Ireland, that "it created a great stir in New England, and led some of the old Unitarians to tremble for their reputations as Christians."

She was disappointed when most Unitarians would not forge ahead with Parker's boldness, and expressed her disgust when, instead, they barred him from the major pulpits of the day.

Lucretia was soon able to express her viewpoints not only in letters and personal contacts, but in public addresses as well. Following the death of one of her children in 1817, she finally expressed her desire to preach. In that year, she was recognized by the Friends as an acknowledged minister and, speaking her "call", Lucretia writes,

At twenty five years of age, surrounded with a family and many cares, I felt called to a more public life of devotion to duty, and engaged in the ministry in the Society of Friends, receiving every encouragement from those in authority until the separation amongst us in 1827.

Ten years after she had begun her preaching, the theo-

logical controversy flared into open schism, and James and Lucretia threw their lot in with the Hicksite (Unitarian) group of Quakers. Cast out of orthodox Quakerdom, Lucretia's viewpoints as an individual remained far ahead of those of any group, even the "radical Hicksites." Her discussion of slavery was regarded as "dangerous," and threatened to disrupt national harmony. The same was true of the non-resistance meetings she held and of her participation in the "unsavory" Women's Rights conventions. She was speaking "out of meeting." The more active she became as a public figure, the more she found herself estranged from all church groups, even her own. The body of Friends many times urged her and her husband to withdraw from their society. Lucretia writes,

What feeble steps have yet been taken from Popery to Protestantism! Our ecclesiastics, be they Bishops or Quaker Elders have still far too much sway.

Lucretia felt, despite the evils of all church societies, and the narrowness and the bigotry she there encountered, that she should remain within the fold. Her devotion to the principles of Elias Hicks gave her the persistency and the patience to stay within the group. To the embarrassment of the Quaker Elders, she appeared at all important occasions, taking a chance whenever she could to quote to them from William Penn, in defense of her advanced position.

Religious Principles and Social Issues

With uncompromising vigor, Lucretia applied her religious principles to the issues of the day. She believed that slavery was wrong and that no pious talk about the Bible, St. Paul, or big business could make it right. She asserted that patience in the face of the slave system was no virtue, but cowardice. She was a Garrisonian abolitionist, demanding "now" what the more timid advocates of the cause were willing to put off until "the time was ripe."

Lucretia championed Garrison when, as a penniless, unknown youth, just released from a Baltimore jail, he came to Philadelphia to organize a national society whose doctrine would be immediate emancipation for the slave. Garrison, earlier considered "a spirited but nice young man with high

ideals" was now held in abhorrence by polite society, as "a dangerous radical." With Whittier at his side he went from house to house in Philadelphia trying to get "respectable" people to lend their names as sponsors to his proposed organization. Failing in this—utterly—he went ahead, nevertheless, and called the meeting. It was, as meetings go, a sad showing. The forty-year old Lucretia, sitting in "proper womanly reticence" in the gallery, knitting, watched the delegates growing more and more timid with each of Garrison's "noble" but radical pleas. Such ardor as the participants had cooled rapidly under their leader's "impossible" demands for action. Lucretia, unable to endure Garrison's lone struggle any longer, put down her knitting, rose from her seat, and addressed the chair. "Right principles are stronger than great names," she told the audience. "If our principles are right why should we be cowards?" Her words were reported as "brief, timely, well-chosen and weighty." Whittier poetically referred to her "clear, sweet voice, the charm of which I have never forgotten." Lucretia, if not idolized by "polite Philadelphians", had a prestige in the community which the younger element lacked. Her words of encouragement came at a crucial time; the conference took on a new tone, and there was no more talk of delay. Garrison, with Lucretia's help, successfully launched the movement which was later to be referred to as "the historic anti-slavery convention of 1833."

Lucretia Mott was no arm-chair reformer. She sacrificed comfort, money and social prestige for the cause of emancipation. During the slavery controversy her husband, after years of financial struggle, was comfortably established in the cotton commission business. Under Lucretia's urging, he abandoned it and entered the wool business, remaining in this with varying degrees of success until his retirement. This change was made at the time their fifth child was born. It was no easy matter to renounce their hard-earned prosperity; it was a great hardship to run a household on non-slave goods. "Free" sugar was not always unadulterated and "free" calicos were seldom pretty. Nor was it easy for the parents to enlist the cooperation of their children in sponsor-

ing so unpopular a cause. At one of the Mott children's birthday parties, Lucretia provided the usual candies, gayly wrapped and distributed to the little guests. Laughingly, the children tore off the wrappings, eager to read the silly couplets they thought were inside. They discovered, instead, numerous anti-slavery sentiments, one of which read,

If slavery comes by color
which God gave,
fashion may change
and you become the slave.

Lucretia's agitations placed herself and her family at the mercy of the mobs which were trying to kill or crush all who opposed slavery. The Mott home was one of the stations in the "Underground Railway," and James and Lucretia were known as "dangerous incendiary leaders." The night Pennsylvania Hall was burned to the ground by angry hoodlums, James and Lucretia sat silently in their home, their doors unbolted, choosing to ward off violence by a rational plea.

Mob Violence and Social Ostracism

There were many such episodes. At one women's rights meeting in New York, when the mob was determined to let no one be heard, William Henry Channing proposed to Lucretia, who was presiding, that they should adjourn the meeting in order to avoid actual physical violence. Lucretia's answer was, "When the hour set for adjourning comes, I will adjourn the meeting, not before." The mob subsided, and the speakers were heard.

Even more disheartening was the social ostracism which the Motts endured. Once Lucretia and James, worn out from speaking and travel, eagerly drove their carriage to the home of a Quaker physician where they thought they were to spend the night. Lucretia, suffering from a severe attack of neuralgia sought her host's advice. His answer was, "Lucretia, I am so deeply afflicted by thy rebellious spirit, that I do not feel that I can prescribe for thee." James calmly suggested that perhaps he and his wife were not welcome and, with no objection on the part of the physician, they left the house. During most of their travels, they had to resort to taverns, an unheard of practice among the Friends.

Unitarian Churches were often the only places which dared open their doors to Lucretia Mott. In Washington when she applied for the use of the Hall of Congress for a lecture, the Hall was granted on the condition she be silent on the slavery issue. Lucretia went, instead, to the Unitarian church where she lectured to a crowded house, with many members of Congress present.

A "Female Devil Disguised in Quaker Garb"

The Motts, sent to London as delegates to the first World Anti-Slavery Convention, discovered that Orthodox Friends in America had already warned the "brethren" in England against Lucretia. She was a "female devil" disguised in Quaker garb. With such a "grapevine" preceding her, she was quickly attacked by the English Society of Friends who labelled her "a Hicksite rebel and a Unitarian, probably not even a Christian." Petty persecution ensued. One of the Quakers, leaving her out of his invitation said, "Thou must excuse me, Lucretia, for not inviting thee with the rest, but I fear thy influence on my children." B. R. Haydon, the celebrated historical painter, was employed to make a sketch of the prominent members of the Anti-Slavery Convention. Lucretia, as the leader of the women delegates from America went for many sittings. But Haydon, after "finding out her infidel notions," as he wrote in his autobiography, decided not to give her the prominent place he intended, reserving that "for a beautiful believer in the divinity of Christ."

Dr. Channing, to whom Lucretia was that "beautiful example of womanhood," voiced disgust at such prejudice toward her, and a young Quaker described her as

Always simple and quiet, her voice never rising above the pitch which was agreeable to the ear; and her statements serious, calm and moderate. . . .

In England Lucretia's efforts on behalf of emancipation brought into full relief the limitations under which all women engaged in a discussion of public problems had to carry on. British tradition did not permit women to sit as official delegates at the convention which she came to attend. William Lloyd Garrison tried unsuccessfully to circumvent this restriction. Delayed at sea, Garrison arrived after the open-

ing of the conference only to discover the women "members" relegated to the gallery. Remembering the time when Lucretia Mott had come to his rescue in Philadelphia, Garrison dramatically refused his seat of honor on the platform, climbed the stairs to the gallery, and took his place beside the women. During the ten days of discussion and voting he sat with them sharing their enforced silence. No one could shake him in his decision, and it was thus that at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, was born, ironically enough, the American Woman Right's Movement.

The seed of feminine foment had been sown in Lucretia Mott, and she promptly found in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, also in London, a ready convert. Lucretia's influence on Elizabeth, twenty-two years her junior, as on many young people, was profound. One day she and Elizabeth went with a group of Americans to visit the British Museum. On entering the building they sat down near the door to rest, telling the party to go on, that they would follow shortly. The group returned at the end of two hours finding the two women in the same spot, wholly absorbed in a discussion which had ranged from the status of women, through slavery to theology.

Lucretia had little concern for the carefully preserved fossils of the museum when she could explore the vital, living mind of a woman like Elizabeth Stanton. As she herself said, rather than nature, she preferred human nature.

Eight years later the two women joined forces in America to organize a cause rivalling Garrison's in unpopularity. James Mott as presiding officer, and Lucretia as co-organizer and convention speaker, were leading lights in the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, the first equal rights convention ever held in America. The assembled women on that occasion demanded: equal rights in the franchise, in education, in industry, in the professions, in political office, in marriage, in personal freedom, in control of property, in guardianship of children, in the making of contracts, in the church, and in the leadership of all moral and public movements. Today, after almost a century, the only right which has been fully won, is the right to vote. Lucretia's influence, one hundred and fifty years after her birth, continues to inspire The

National Woman's Party, which struggles for the ratification of a new amendment to the Constitution. Aimed to carry the fight for complete freedom for women, it is appropriately named the *Lucretia Mott Amendment*, under which "men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction."

The False, Theological Facade of Religion

A crusader all her life for many causes, Mrs. Mott's deepest interest probably lay in the cause of liberal religion, which she believed could alone furnish the necessary motivation for social reform. It was her experience that she could succeed best in persuading others to concentrate on social justice once she stripped their religion of its false theological facade.

No one believed more firmly than she in the right of every person to his own form of worship. Lucretia never, for example, used the word "tolerant," explaining that to admit tolerance of another's belief was to express superiority. Nor did she "grant" another a point of doctrine. Everyone, she felt, had a right to have his belief respected not "granted."

Nor did Lucretia Mott conceal her own preference for a religion of moral action to one of theological speculation. In her personal life, the liberal Hicksite religion had been the basis of all her social reform. It had been for her the "elan vital", moving her to open her house as an "Underground Railway," to fight for the rights of Negroes and of women, and to insist unequivocally on social justice wherever her highly sensitive soul found justice denied. Lucretia felt it not only her right but her duty to make others "see the light" of liberal religion as she herself had come to see it and experience it.

William Lloyd Garrison, writing in *The Liberator*, paid his tribute to her methods:

If my mind has become liberalized in any degree (and I think it has burst every sectarian trammel), if the theological dogmas which I once regarded as essential to Christianity I now repudiate as absurd and pernicious, I am largely indebted to James and Lucretia Mott for the change.

Robert Collyer, whose Chicago church gained the reputation of being "the glory of Christian Liberalism", was deeply influenced by Lucretia Mott. Before meeting the Motts, he had branded the abolitionists as "busy bodies"; but after knowing Lucretia, that "grand-hearted Quaker preacher", as he called her, he adopted her cause. Lucretia never tried to win him to her religious group, advising him to be a good Methodist as long as possible. Collyer, however, left the Methodist Church and wrote in retrospect, "I love to remember with what tender pathos Lucretia opened her heart to me, when it seemed almost like death to leave my old mother church." When Collyer's companions one after another deserted him for his change in religious opinion, he regarded his friendship with the Motts as at least partial compensation.

Robert Collyer's Reservations

But even the emancipated Collyer could not keep pace with Lucretia's bold religion. Lucretia was, he said, "a radical of the radicals, steering by the head, as I thought, a little too steadily and giving faith but a poor show against reason."

For Lucretia insisted more strongly with each year that religion must have a rational basis. In this mood she could write,

Proving all things, trying all things, and holding fast only to that which is good, is the great religious duty of this age. . . . I desire to escape the narrow bonds of a particular church, and to live under the open sky, in the broad light, looking far and wide, seeing with my own eyes, hearing with my own ears, and following truth meekly but resolutely, however arduous or solitary may be the path in which she leads.

In her simple but powerful preaching, Lucretia constantly reiterated, "truth for authority, not authority for truth." She believed that the "Inner Light" within each individual was a better guide to truth than authoritative creeds, however revered. She once wrote that women in particular have "pinned their faith to ministerial sleeves." They dare not rely on their own "God-given powers of discernment." Questioning authority was with Lucretia Mott a vigorous mental habit applied alike to great issues and small. In her own

home she arrived at a decision regarding work on the Sabbath day. Getting the family sewing done was considered more important than adhering to man-made laws about a particular day.

Again,

Being fond of reading, I omitted much unnecessary stitching and ornamental work in the sewing for my family, so that I might have more time for this indulgence, and for the improvement of the mind.

She did not discard the simple costume of the Quaker because she did not believe any principle was involved worthy of such a turmoil as this act would have engendered. She attached no special significance to the dress and never advised others to adopt it.

Social Thinking and Free Religion

No field or subject was too sacred to be challenged. Once at a marriage ceremony, as the minister closed with the usual words, "I pronounce you to be man and wife," he overheard Lucretia say, in an undertone, "husband and wife." Asked, after the service, to give her reason for such a comment, Lucretia explained that it always jarred on her when she heard a couple declared "man" and "wife," thus placing the woman in the position of a mere appendage. Did not the marriage ceremony leave a man still a man and woman still a woman? The emphasis should be on the new relation the two now had to each other; they should be pronounced "husband and wife." This logic convinced the minister who "had never thought about it in that way."

Lucretia's keen, logical mind, and the steady pressure of her influence played no small part in changing the social thinking of her day, whether it was in the matter of correct conduct on the sabbath, the position of the Negro, the status of women or the wisdom of war. Moreover, her religious liberalism received, from her later writings and lectures, increasing encouragement. At the Autumn Convention of Unitarian Christians held in Philadelphia in 1846, she urged her colleagues not to compromise religious progress.

Be not afraid of the reputations of the infidels, or the opprobrium of the religious world. . . . If you have had Chan-

ning and Worcester to lead you on. why are you not prepared to carry the work forward, even beyond them?

She worked hand in hand with Theodore Parker in *The Council of Reformers* in Boston, and at the age of seventy-four, despite ill health, went to that city to attend a meeting to organize *The Free Religious Association*. She would not allow her name to appear among the officers of this association on account of a phrase in its constitution which seemed to her to lay unnecessary stress on the technical study of theology. But she said no reform since the close of the anti-slavery struggle had interested her so deeply as that of free religion.

Lucretia Mott died in 1880 at the age of eighty-seven. Samuel Longfellow said in his memorial sermon that "Hers was a life ordered by divine laws, not by human opinions and customs." William A. Furness recited the beatitudes at her funeral and Dr. Henry T. Child conducted the service at the grave. As her coffin was being reverently lowered into the earth in the midst of deep silence, a voice, whose owner could stand the suspense no longer, cried out, "Will no one say anything?" Another responded from a full heart, "Who can speak? The preacher is dead."

Lucretia Mott, "the soul of the woman's movement," "the black man's Goddess of Liberty," "the flower of Quakerism", is dead. But there is something eternal and contagious in the dynamic quality of her religious liberalism.

Can Schweitzer Save Us from Niebuhr?

By ROBERT L. COPE

Religious liberalism is indebted to Reinhold Niebuhr in much the same sense that Luther was indebted to Eck. An able opponent has forced an issue that requires more than dissatisfaction and feeble protestation. It demands of those who cannot agree that they not only re-affirm their position but substantiate it.

In reviewing *Human Destiny*, the second volume of Niebuhr's Gifford lectures, Edwin E. Aubrey said, "The book is addressed primarily to the overconfident, be they secular or religious optimists about the future of society, or self-assured dogmatists who make their own truth the truth, or perfectionists who expect sainthood in this life." What he means is that this book is addressed primarily to liberals. Before they can attempt to justify themselves many liberals will have to plead guilty to these charges. For they have been thinking as if they had just read Darwin, acting as if this were the Enlightenment, and talking as if the Kingdom would possibly arrive tomorrow.

This is not an age for overconfidence; these are not the days that nurture optimism. Liberals thus find that they are under fire because many have allowed themselves to be victims of an original enthusiasm.

Are the values then that flowed from their approach to be repudiated? It would seem so, for Niebuhr not only asks them to abandon their easy optimism but also the wisdom that produced it, and to adopt a neo-reformation theology—a theology which in its essence is *neo* only in that it has survived an eclipse and found new spokesmen. For liberalism to succumb would result in the ancient dilemma of throwing the baby out with the bath.

The tenets religious liberalism has most zealously championed can be reduced to these: God is to be found as an immanent spirit operating within the natural order; man, the highest product of the order, shares to a degree the nature of his creator and, as such, is essentially good; endowed with reason and intellect, man can trust these capaci-

ties so that he is enabled both to know and to direct his activities in the light of this wisdom. Thus the course of history shall be upward and onward forever.

Considered simply within the limits of this discussion, these shibboleths remain the justification of candor and pride because they shifted the center of gravity in religious thought from the other world to this world. They consequently gave a positive place to the worth of man's intellectual achievements and directed them toward a program of social action. Science and social dynamics, two emphases that the religious mind was forced to take cognizance of, were thus given a theological framework within which they could operate. That this gave way to easy optimism, that liberals were too confident in the immediate possibilities of man, and that they came to find an almost certain inevitability in progress is as unfortunate as it is unrealistic. But this is not an indictment of the values of liberalism. It does require that liberals find a more profound optimism with which to implement and motivate their emphasis upon the social expression of religion. Neo-orthodoxy again illustrates that religion cannot abandon the one without the other.

When One Absurdity Displaces Another

It was Sidney Hook's observation that, "Niebuhr seems to think that once we have rejected the romantic notion that man is essentially good, we must substitute for it the notion that man is essentially bad. This is driving out one absurdity by another." It is just such an uncompromising transition that Niebuhr has made.

Far from being an immanent spirit within the natural order which man can apprehend through reason and intelligence, God becomes the "hidden sovereign" beyond the comprehension of man's finite and sinful pride which seeks to understand the source of existence in terms of itself. Man's knowledge about the nature of God is incomplete and even false. It is thus totally dependent upon the "Word" of the other self, the self disclosure of God as received by faith.

Disregarding the fact that this view involves itself in the dogmatism of authoritarianism, it might at first glance seem to present a positive basis for social action,

justified and motivated as man's response to God's revealed will. But according to Niebuhr's thinking, man is both inevitably and responsibly a sinful creature. Pride and overconfidence in his own powers, particularly the intellectual, coupled with an incurable optimism, make him so weak that he is incapable of living up to the good. The more man undertakes to further the good, the more sinful he is in his arrogant presumption. The only hope of salvation is through the intervention of God. This intervention is made with total disregard for the moral worth of the creatures it is bestowed upon. A pamphlet just issued by the Unitarians entitled, *What Is This Neo-Orthodoxy?*, strikes a telling blow when it declares, "This is the old Calvinistic determinism, and it is morally paralyzing." Despite the fact that Niebuhr's theology makes a place for the paradoxical, it would be more miracle than paradox if a general acceptance of his emphasis gave Christianity a positive social expression.

To ask of any theology what it shall produce in terms of motivated behavior is to ask an ultimate question. In this age the Christian Church is called upon to speak out with all the vitality of its faith and to point a new direction for reconversion and peace. Shall despair be its gospel? We must be saved from this manifestation of what Albert Schweitzer would call a world-and-life-negating pessimism.

The Christian world has too long applauded Albert Schweitzer as humanitarian and ignored him as theologian and philosopher. Why have we not recognized that life and thought are dependent on one another? In admiring the fruits we have ignored the roots by which they were nurtured. The *Albert Schweitzer Jubilee Book* has recently been published by its editor A. A. Roback. It contains twenty-four essays by various scholars in honor of Albert Schweitzer. It is hoped that in spite of the limited edition this volume will serve to bring a more inclusive appreciation of the depth and breadth of his work.

In an essay on the productive tensions in his work, J. S. Bixler observes,

Albert Schweitzer has entitled his autobiography, *Out Of My Life and Thought*, as if to indicate that life and thought had each contributed in its own distinctive way to his work-

ing philosophy. The double emphasis is, I think, not merely a matter of rhetoric.

If the many admirers of his life will bear this in mind, his thought will soon find the recognition it deserves.

In his major work, *Civilization and Ethics*, which is the second part of *The Philosophy of Civilization*, Schweitzer has made an historical study of philosophy and concluded that two types of theory have emerged: the ethic of altruism and the ethic of self-fulfillment. Neither of these has been successful in basing itself upon ultimate principles. Both contain elements of value. There is an instinctive belief that active beneficence is the basic content of ethics, but, at the same time, an awareness that the ethic of self-realization is right in insisting that ethics must begin with the individual and put him in his proper place in relation to the universe. His problem is to formulate a theory that makes this dual consideration and yet remains founded on ultimate, elemental principles.

Reverence for Life, and the Will-to-Live

Upon what elemental principles are we to found our ethics? Upon intelligence and reason as liberals have attempted? Upon the presuppositions of faith as authoritarians have claimed? No. According to Schweitzer ethics must be founded upon the ultimate content of consciousness, which is for each individual the will-to-live. Knowledge of the world is a knowledge from outside and remains incomplete. Knowledge derived from the will-to-live is direct and takes us back to the mysterious movements of life as it is in itself. The volition which is given in our will-to-live reaches beyond our knowledge of the world. Schweitzer thus finds as the basis for ethics the most fundamental experience of the living organism, its desire to perpetuate its own existence.

The will-to-live is resident in all the forces of nature. But in man it has become conscious of itself. By beginning to think about life and the world, man is led directly and irresistibly to *reverence for life*. Schweitzer writes,

Since a man begins to think about the mystery of his life and the links which connect him with the life that fills the world, he cannot but bring to bear upon his own life—and all other life that comes within his reach—the principles of rever-

ence for life, and manifest this principle by ethical world- and life-affirmation expressed in action.

The individual reverses his own will-to-live and is therefore life-affirming. As a consequence of thought, men recognize this will within other individuals and all of nature. Through reverence for it they are brought not only to a life but to a world-affirmation. With this consciousness is given the sense of obligation to fight on the side of will-to-live, to promote life everywhere and in every way. Thus Reverence for Life passes into experience and we have Schweitzer's definition of ethics as, "self-devotion for the sake of life, motivated by reverence for life."

But Schweitzer's philosophy does not end here. It goes on to affirm that "depth and stability in thinking come to the world-and-life-view of activist ethics only when this springs from mysticism." It is a mysticism that brings man into a spiritual inward relation to Being. It is a mysticism that is alive, forever divorced from the supra-ethical abstractions of those who believe they can look beyond the actual nature of phenomenon. Ethical mysticism consists of relating oneself, in the spirit of reverence for life to the multi-form manifestations of the will-to-live which together constitute the world. As Schweitzer has said,

All profound world-view is mysticism, the essence of which is this: that out of my unsophisticated and naive existence in the world there comes, as a result of thought about self and the world, spiritual self-devotion to the mysterious infinite Will which is continuously manifested in the universe.

Being Both Pessimistic and Optimistic

Schweitzer wrote in his autobiography that when asked if he were an optimist or a pessimist he would answer that his knowledge is pessimistic but his willing and hoping are optimistic. He calls upon us to allow the will and the knowledge to come together in a relation that is honorable to both. We are forced to acknowledge a pessimism because we experience in its full weight what appears to be the absence of purpose in the course of world happenings. The problems of evil and suffering in the world are ever before us. But we cannot allow ourselves to get lost in brooding or resignation. Each of us can do something to bring a portion of

the misery to an end. If our personalities are profound enough to let the ideals of ethical progress radiate from them as a force, there will start an activity that will be strong enough to bring restoration from the decay of our civilization. The only destiny that awaits mankind is that which it prepares for itself. These words are typical of his profound simplicity,

Because I have confidence in the power of truth and of the spirit, I believe in the future of mankind. Ethical world- and life-affirmation contains within itself an optimistic willing and hoping which can never be lost. It is, therefore, never afraid to face the dismal reality, and see it as it really is.

It is thus that life and thought, intellect and will, pessimism and optimism resolve themselves in what Bixler has aptly called "productive tensions."

The philosophy of Albert Schweitzer is distinctly a religious pronouncement. Philosophically, God is the infinite Being found in the natural order as creative Force. Religiously, God is revealed within human life as ethical Will. Schweitzer conceives Christianity to be the deepest expression of the religious mind. He considers the ethic of Jesus to be identical with the ethic of reverence for life, but in the latter it is brought to philosophic expression and conceived as intellectually necessary. The religion of Jesus is essentially an unresolved mixture of pessimism and optimism. It is a religion of redemption and of the Kingdom of God. Union with God brings not only redemption from the world, but the necessity of ethical action that seeks a transformation of the world. In *Christianity and The Religions of The World* he asserts, "According to the teaching of Jesus men are to be gripped by God's will of love, and must help carry out that will in this world, in small things as in great things, in saving as in pardoning." The service to which men are called is "to be glad instruments of God's love in this imperfect world." W. Montgomery, writing on *Schweitzer's Ethic* in the *Hibbert Journal* in 1925 supplies a fitting conclusion for this brief outline of his thought,

But all this, you may say is the commonplace of much ethical teaching, and so it is as regards content. All Schweitzer would claim is that the ethic of Reverence for Life enables

the altruist to give a clearer answer to the question. "What are you doing it for?" The answer being: "I am doing it for the enhancement of life, which my deepest consciousness tells me is the ultimate duty of man."

If liberalism has been guilty of an easy optimism, it need be no longer. If the justification for its emphasis has rested upon a rosy hangover from the Enlightenment, it need find it there no longer. Its essential gospel has been substantiated by the fundamental content of life itself. From that elemental basis there arises an ethic of life-and world-affirmation that in its very nature is profoundly optimistic. This optimism is tempered by a realistic sense of contingency. It is aware of all the sins and shortcomings of man in the face of which Reinhold Niebuhr has found human willing and hoping presumptuous. But it has not lost itself in resignation. Because the spirit of God is not obvious does not mean it is forever the "hidden other." The optimism nurtured by Reverence for Life says to man: the spirit of God is within you, find it; it is resident within all of the natural order, honor it; it is the only salvation, serve it.

We must be saved from the negating pessimism that functions only to say, "see how miserable you are." We must go on from there and serve the elemental optimism that proclaims with Albert Schweitzer,

Open your eyes and look for some man, or some work for the sake of man, which needs a little sympathy, a little sensibility, a little human endeavor.

Liberal Faith and the Test for Unity

Two brief communications setting forth specific problems of faith and practice among religious liberals are published here conjointly. The first, Religious Pessimism and Faith in Europe, came from the secretariat of The International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom, located in Haarlem, Holland. The second, Brief Reflections on Protestant Unity, came from Prof. J. E. Ledden of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Vermont. For editorial comment on these two communications turn to page 129.

RELIGIOUS PESSIMISM AND FAITH IN EUROPE

It is a fine autumn afternoon, and we secretaries of the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom are having our meeting. A letter has been read from one of our correspondents in America asking why we do not do anything to warn the world in view of the quickly deteriorating international situation. What are we to do? Shall we repeat what has been said time and again and what in his heart everybody knows? If we liberals are to say anything that is worth reading it must be more than to express a vague and friendly wish; it must be based on a knowledge of the situation, and born from a great religious vision. We do not feel capable of speaking this word. As a matter of fact, we do not know anybody in our liberal movement who would be capable of doing so.

Nevertheless, we do want to say something to all our friends the world over in this period of tension, hardly a year after the last war. We are all shifting towards pessimism. The first wave of optimism after the pessimism of the war, rapidly is receding. Some people are expecting a second war in a few months. China, the Balkans, Persia and Palestine are centers of unrest from which the fire may start. And above all of us is the menace of the atomic bomb which—who knows?—might be able one day to bring an end to all life on the globe. There is a chance that we are not going to “eat the soup as hot as it is served” (a saying in our country), but even without a second war in the near future we are in for a period of great tensions, crises and fears, which will strain all such spiritual reserves as our peoples still possess.

What can we say in this situation? We must be frank and confess that we cannot be optimists. There is no reason for an optimistic view of the crisis of today; but we can give a message of faith, a faith which is able to lift us out of our pessimism. As it always has been, so it is now, faith makes a man say, “and yet . . .” That is the power which may carry a man through fear and sorrow, through illness and death, when from the depth of his soul this word

emerges. Christ in Gethsemane, wrestling with his fear of death, asking that the cup may pass from him, finds the power to say—we do not know how he does, but he finds it—"and yet . . ."

But how do we find this power? *First* of all, by working. We all have our daily work in factories and offices, in our homes and our political parties. All this work serves an end. It may help a man become more cheerful, or it may contribute to a better understanding between people. Even in unseen places it may be a factor determining the future of mankind. . . . In doing our work, in giving our heart to it, we rise above pessimism; we feel that the forces of hope, love and confidence are carrying us along.

God's "Sublime Destiny for Man"

And *secondly*, we do not forget the nobility of man. This we must say with strong conviction: We believe that God has a sublime destiny for man. After the creation of Adam God bids him give a name to every creature. Man is to have a royal place in creation. We have the same belief in the nobility of man. Man is more than a sensual animal. This is only a part of his being; it is a powerful part, indeed, but it is not the essence. Man has a divine calling.

And *thirdly*, as Christians we cannot but see our lives in the light of the coming of Christ. No matter what our doctrine of Christ is, to all of us he is the token showing that there is one Eternal Being behind our lives "who is mindful of us," as the writer of Psalm VIII puts it so beautifully. The power which carries the world is not a blind, brute force whose trail is marked by voracity and war. We know that these evil forces exist, and it is one of the most difficult mysteries of creation why they exist. But we believe that the power which is the origin of all has shown its countenance best in Christ, in his life which burned for righteousness and love. It was he who, in the word he spoke and in the cross he carried, wanted to show us the way to the world which God is preparing for us, the Kingdom of God. In the light of Christ we know that the great "and yet . . ." is written in the heart of creation, and that there is no need for us to say it, because God has said it already. We could perhaps sum up the contents of the Bible in these two words, "and yet . . ."

Looking to the world as we see it we must be pessimists, *but we know that there is also another world which is the true one.* In this faith we shall undertake the work to which we are called and we fervently hope that you will do the same under the inspiration of your faith.

BRIEF REFLECTIONS ON PROTESTANT UNITY

We have heard a good deal concerning the desirability of unity among Protestants. Perhaps it would be well, as a basic preliminary step, to reflect upon the meaning of "unity" in this connection: just what type of unity is it that we, as Protestants, desire? In the present short article, I shall confine myself to this preliminary question.

Certainly we do not take as important, or even desirable, unity in the externalities of our religion—in specific ritualistic forms of worship, for example. Within particular groups, it is true, such unity enhances inner religious life, and serves as a symbol of a religious heritage. But to insist upon universal Protestant agreement in such matters would be to create an empty, surface unity.

Nor should we desire unity in belief among Protestants. This is obvious as regards the *details* of an individual Protestant's belief—for example, in his interpretation of particular Biblical passages. It is equally, though not so obviously, true as regards the *fundamentals* of a Protestant's belief.

Consider his "belief in the Bible." There is, in a significant sense, no one Bible in which all Protestants believe: each, according to his own interpretation (which, as a Protestant, he is free to render), finds in the written text a meaning somewhat at variance with certain others' interpretations. Protestants, then, cannot, and need not, point to the Bible as an unequivocal statement of a common belief.

For analogous reasons, we cannot, and need not, take our "belief in Christ" to be a common belief, available as an ultimate basis for unity. For among Protestants there is, quite legitimately, wide divergence as to Christ's nature, his relation to God the Father, his life and teaching. Thus, when we all profess a belief in Christ, we are actually professing quite different—sometimes incompatible—beliefs.

Belief in God, no Ground for Unity

Similarly, we cannot take our "belief in God" as grounds for genuine unity. For here again, what at first blush appears to be a meeting of minds among Protestants turns out, again quite justifiably, to be a point of radical disagreement: Is God entirely beyond the natural world? Is He limited in any respect? Is He a person? To say we all believe, at least, that He *exists*, does not avoid this difficulty, since we do not agree *what* it is that, we're quite sure, exists.

Thus it is not in the realm of belief that we should seek Protestant unity. Disunity in belief among Protestants, far from pointing to degeneration or weakness in the Protestant religion, indicates a lively concern over truth on the part of minds which are genuinely free. So long as we retain this essential spirit of Protestantism,

we shall have to expect and accept—and indeed should welcome—this radical clash in ideas. Certainly we should not desire, at least for the foreseeable future, a unity in belief among Protestants.

Yet there is a significant, and partially attained, unity which, as Protestants, we might seek to advance. This is a unity in three areas of religious life.

The first area is that of moral attitude and endeavor. We can all adopt with increased sincerity and vigor certain fundamental elements of Christian ethics—such as the principles of love and humility. We do not always agree upon the application of these principles in particular circumstances, or upon the ultimate sanction of the principles themselves; but that they are valid, none of us would deny. And all sincere Protestants endeavor to live and work, sacrificially, in accordance with them.

The second area of unity is found in an underlying religious experience. We all share, to some extent, a mixed feeling of awe and fear—shall we say reverence?—in the face of the sublimities of nature, or in the sudden inspiration of a (perhaps once-again) fresh insight into the nature of things—an experience that may be called up ever anew in genuine worship. We share, too, the deeply religious experiences—so hard to capture in words—evoked by the gentleness and quiet beauty of nature, or caused by a determined consecration, or re-consecration, to a high ideal—as in prayer.

We might well strive to further such unity, which is profound and priceless, and lies at the basis of the true religious community.

Finally, we may attempt to advance unity in the area of methods, seeking to reach closer agreement in the procedure through which we are to arrive at our religious beliefs. It is in this realm that Protestantism can make a unique contribution to religious life. For, as I see it, at the heart of Protestantism is a denial of any authority above the individual's own highest grasp of truth: the individual is free to render his own interpretation of the Bible, to formulate his own conceptions of Christ and God. Whereas this rules out—at least for the present—Protestant unity through belief, as we have seen, yet it permits, and indeed demands, a unity in the spirit of approach to truth adopted by each Protestant. A Protestant is required to stand on his own feet, intellectually—to *test* his religious convictions. This is not only the most unique, but also the most difficult, aspect of Protestantism. But it is what makes Protestantism truly a religious democracy, in which the individual finds integrity and spiritual freedom.

It is for greater unity in these three areas of deeply religious life that Protestants should strive, I believe. This is what we mean, or should mean, by Protestant unity.

University of Vermont

J. E. Ledden

NEW SERVICE MATERIALS

Edited by VINCENT B. SILLIMAN

Devotional Utterances Addressed to the Audience

The phrase "the finest prayer ever addressed to a Boston audience"—supposedly a newspaper comment, always quoted as a pleasantry—is not wholly inappropriate. For the purpose of speaking a prayer in the presence of a congregation is that the congregation may hear it; and what the congregation actually hears is dependent upon the inherent interest of the ideas included and the effectiveness of the literary and vocal expression of these ideas. Otherwise the leader might as well stand up in silence and merely think his prayer. In a sense, any prayer spoken before an audience is addressed to the audience.

Nor are prayers literally addressed to the audience anything new under the sun. Benedictions in traditional form are invariably addressed to the audience, not to God: "The Lord bless you. . . ." Before the Reformation in England a form of prayer in English called "bidding the bedes" was included in the Sunday mass. The preacher named subjects for the devotion of the people, and psalms and prayers followed. The naming of topics became an extended and elaborate devotional utterance not unlike the pastoral prayer of non-liturgical churches in form and content, and it was known as the "bidding prayer." Bidding prayers have been more or less in use in the Anglican communion ever since; and an example will be found in the present prayer book of the Protestant Episcopal Church on page 47.

Litanies composed of a succession of biddings to the audience, followed generally or always by the response "Lord, have mercy," have been part of Christian public devotions since the early centuries. The Eucharist of the Eastern Orthodox Church contains several litanies of this pattern. Here is the beginning of the first of them:

Deacon: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace that is from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace of the whole world; for the welfare of God's holy Churches, and for the union of all:

Choir: Lord, have mercy. . . .

Note that the passages assigned to the deacon are addressed not to God but to the congregation.

In the Church of Rome, oddly enough, certain devotional utterances are actually addressed to inanimate objects. Thus, very early in the mass, the priest addresses the incense, saying, "Be thou blessed by him in whose honor thou shalt burn. Amen." But we do much the same in our baptismal formulas when we address by name an infant who hasn't the faintest idea as to what we are about, saying, "I baptize thee . . . Amen." If this formula, literally addressed to the uncomprehending ears of an infant, isn't somehow a prayer, just what is it?

In the present service book for voluntary use of the Universalist and Unitarian fellowships, entitled *Services of Religion*, each of the first five orders of service includes toward the beginning an "exhortation" addressed to the congregation, and an "invocation" addressed to God. In spite of the difference of form, one is as much a prayer as the other so far as religious feeling is concerned.

For a generation or two, considerable numbers of religious liberals have had conscientious scruples with regard to devotional utterances addressed to God. We cannot here discuss the reasons for these scruples. Nevertheless people who share these scruples have been moved to formulate devotional utterances of their own—expressions of the profoundest yearnings of their hearts. In printed orders of service these devotional utterances are often designated "meditation" or "words of aspiration." It is perhaps quite unintentional that these utterances have taken forms which have long been part of Christian custom—prayers and litanies addressed not to God but to the audience. In other words, whatever they are called, contemporary devotional utterances addressed to the audience are, from the point of view of

Christian custom, simply prayers. And the fact remains that, whatever their form, all prayers uttered before an audience are, in a sense, addressed to the audience.

Service for the Reception and the Naming of an Infant

The minister shall say to the congregation:

It is fitting, when a new human life has entered the world, that the child shall be set apart and acknowledged by the parents before the community, and that both the parents and the community—in recognition of the importance of those whose thoughts and deeds are to create the world of tomorrow—dedicate themselves to their part in the growth and spiritual nurture of this new member of society.

Then shall the parents stand before the congregation; and the minister shall address the parents:

Our friends, in bringing your child before us, you do confess your faith that he belongs not only to you, but also to humanity.

You acknowledge that he is committed to your care and nurture: that to you is entrusted for a time the sacred obligation of this new life with all its budding possibilities.

You declare that you desire for him that he shall grow in strength, in wisdom, and in the love and knowledge of the good.

To this end you will endeavor, to the best of your ability, to instruct him by your teaching and your example, and to love him with an unselfish love?

Answer: We will.

Then shall the minister say to the parents:

Will you name this child?

Then the minister shall say, repeating the child's name:

M or N . . . I touch you with this water which is a symbol of purity, on your brow, your lips and your hands, to dedicate your thoughts, your speech, and your work to our higher human heritage. May you serve with all your mind and soul the ideals of truth and beauty, and put on strength and nobility of purpose day by day as your life unfolds into the

future, to the end that the true richness and blessings of life may be abundantly yours.

Prayer, with the congregation standing:

For the gift of childhood, whose innocence and laughter keep the world young, we lift up thankful hearts. May this new life, which we have accepted into our fellowship of friendship and ideals, receive abundantly of the blessings of health, love, knowledge and wisdom, and render back richly into the common heritage for these benefits. Remembering that those who come after must inherit their world from us, we dedicate ourselves to our part in the building of a kinder, juster and happier human order. Amen. *Jacob Trapp*

Editorial Note. We trust that the publication of this beautiful service will stimulate other ministers to submit other services for the baptism or dedication of infants, and alternative elements for use in such services—baptismal formulas, prayers, benedictions, etc. We point out certain departures from custom: the touching of brow, lips and hands with water; the minister's use of a question instead of the injunction, "Name this child"; the standing of the congregation not at the beginning of the service, but toward the end for a special prayer of dedication. We are glad Dr. Trapp does not dip a rosebud in water and shake it over the child's face, nor substitute a shower of rose petals—we have seen it done!—for the dropping of water.

Commendation

We call special attention to a choral reading entitled, "We Are the Red and the Black," by the Rev. Gilbert Phillips, prepared in the course of his work as assistant director in charge of education and recreation of the Unitarian Workcamp, held in 1946, at Brooks, Maine. The language is vivid and interesting; the thought is sensible and challenging; the form is original. The usefulness of this document as it stands is necessarily limited; but the perusal of it should stimulate the preparation of other choral readings of comparable originality. Copies may be obtained from Unitarian Workcamps, 9 Park Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts.

BOOKS

The Problem of World Disunity

THE MEETING OF EAST AND WEST. By F. S. C. Northrop.
New York: The Macmillan Company. 531 pp. \$6.00.

Agreeable and disagreeable contentions are so intermixed in this book, that this reviewer has a difficult task in assorting them. First to the positive side. That the East can make a creative meeting with the West, and is in the process of so doing, is agreed. That the ideological differences of the world are important, and that they must at least in part be rationalized into a common philosophy, is admitted. Much of the provincialism of men is due, as Northrop points out, to the exclusiveness of our ideals. The analysis and survey which Northrop makes of the philosophical assumptions underlying the cultural, economic and governmental fashions of our age is creative. He does the job clearly and concisely. The review is stimulating. This is a book that everyone interested in understanding the conflicting ideas of our times should read. But, in my opinion, one should read it to quarrel with it as much as to agree with it. And since Mr. Northrop is an able exponent of his own philosophy, your reviewer will use the bulk of this review in criticism of it.

This book is an illustration of the complete arrogance of which the intellectual is capable. If there is any characteristic occupational disease of thinkers and philosophers, this is it. They come in time to look upon ideas and philosophical abstractions as the formal and causative factors for all that is. Northrop does, it is true, try to relate his over-emphasis of ideological factors, to the more practical forces at work in history, but the over-all emphasis he gives to the functional power of ideas belies his attempts at modesty. To intimate, as he does, that consciously held—or even subconsciously infiltrating ideologies—are so basically and crucially significant in the lives people live, is to blindly discount the more irrational forces prevailing in the natural world, in mankind's sheer struggle for survival, in our biological drives and in the working of unrationalized racial customs and habits. A good antidote to Northrop's intellectualism is to be found in Ellsworth Huntington's *Mainsprings of Civilization*, where geography, weather, diet, health, physical heredity and the multiple influences of the physical environments are weighed in their importance in the development of civilizations.

What Northrop seems to be seeking is a higher order of abstraction in which the basic problems can be simplified to the utmost degree. He seeks in the sociology of culture something comparable

to the mathematical formula of the physicist as a principle unlocking the mystery of the physical universe. We have been told that men like Einstein can unlock the universe with an equation. Northrop tries to unlock the conflicts of human history with a philosophical equation. If your reviewer has interpreted his activity correctly, what Northrop believes he has done is this: by solving a fundamental problem in the highly abstract and philosophical study of epistemology, Northrop believes he has unentangled all of mankind's difficulties. Northrop's solution of the epistemological problem is set up in what he calls a two-termed epistemic correlation between the aesthetic component and the theoretic component in human experience, which supplants the previously three-termed relation involving the mental substance of Locke. Whether or not Northrop has solved the epistemological puzzle is beside the point. The criticism is upon the importance he attaches to this problem and to his conclusions regarding it. That now he has accomplished this theoretical solution the way lies simple and open to the resolution of our human tangle is what is hard to comprehend.

Resolving The Hindu Caste System

An example of Northrop's reasoning is seen in his interpretation of the caste system in India, which he says was based in the relative abilities of different persons in the religious disciplines of Hinduism. When this became hardened into a hereditary caste system it tended "to deny the operation of the distinctions which brought it into existence." From this Northrop concludes: "Recognition of this fact should enable the Indians to correct the abuses which this error in application has produced, while at the same time retaining the traditional truth which the initial inception of the caste system in Indian culture envisaged." It seems to me that both sides of Northrop's error are illustrated here. First, it is very brash to conclude that the caste system in India was caused merely by the freezing of differences in religious attainment. Were not racial, social, nationalistic and other cultural differences involved in the establishment of the castes? And what influence toward the solution of this problem does Mr. Northrop think the mere pointing out of a logical fallacy such as the above would effect? Does he think that all the vested interests, economic, social, political and otherwise, now incorporated with the caste system, will graciously evaporate when they have been shown the philosophical aberrations in their system? It seems to me that Northrop is involved in a naive optimism regarding human nature that is strikingly similar to that of the eighteenth century rationalists. We have surely learned that there is more involved in getting men to behave rationally than merely pointing out to them the rational solution of their problems.

Northrop carries his abstraction to ridiculous extremes in try-

ing to find one basic component for the East, which he calls the aesthetic component, based on the immediate and primitive acceptance of the world as presented to the senses, and a second for the West, which he calls the theoretic component, and identifies with the abstractions and postulates of the scientists, which relate us to factors in our environment which we can never experience directly and sensuously. But, do these factors exist with purity or clarity in either culture? Are they not everywhere intermixed? Is not Northrop arbitrarily simplifying and abstracting the problem when he tries to simplify the East and the West into two component factors which can then be wedded and the problem thus solved? The whole thing is too neat and too pat, too intellectualistic to do justice to the tangled and brambly quality of the real world.

Northrop also tries to find in what he calls the "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum," which he says underlies all the differentiations of specific sensed experience, a sort of absolute. He asserts with Oriental mystics that this all-pervading, "all-embracing, indeterminate, undifferentiated, and hence positively indescribable portion of the aesthetic component" is, however, immediately experienceable by the mystic as an objective reality, and, therefore, is as scientifically respectable as any other natural phenomena. However, we have to take the mystic's word for the dependability of his experience, and how can we know or properly evaluate the subjective and psychological factors that may be involved? It seems to me that the existence of this undifferentiated continuum is highly suspect. But, on such a wobbly basis, Northrop proposes this as one of the components for a new interpretation of the divine nature of God. And on such foundations Northrop thinks he has established a normative pattern for the reconstitution of human culture. The whole assumption comprising one of the most immodest assumptions of omniscience and omnicompetence of mortal man. I am afraid this verdict must be, "Unproven."

Kenneth L. Patton

Man Sings for Liberty

THE POETRY OF FREEDOM. Edited by William Rose Benet and Norman Cousins. New York: Random House. 820 pp. \$3.50.

The universality of the theme, human freedom—and its timelessness—is stressed by the editors of this collection of world poetry, as well as the fact that poets have always been in the forefront of humanity's fight against tyranny and injustice. "The story of liberty," say the editors, "is also the story of the world's great poetry."

The book makes good such a claim, for it presents poetry from all parts of the world, as well as from all ages of the world's

history. The three general divisions are British (including writers from the Dominions), American, and foreign. The latter includes poetry of Mexico, South and Central America, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and the continents of Europe and Asia. And as for the time range, there are selections from the Old Testament and the early Greek writers, as well as from the Second World War era.

Well aware of the varying concepts of freedom, the editors explain that humanity's poets "fought against the threat wherever it showed itself, and the threats were many and varied." Oppression of human rights, in whatever form or by whatever group, has been castigated by the ever-sensitive poet. From the mild fourteenth-century statement of William Langland that

The needy are our neighbors if we note rightly
As prisoners in cells, or poor folk in hovels,

to the modern American Stafford's acrid condemnation of "The noble white man's view of what is just!"—the reader senses the great scope of this fight for human freedom depicted in the poetry of this book.

There is Abraham Cowley stating that a freeman is he

Who governs his own course with steady hand,
Who does himself with sovereign power command,

there is John Milton crying out for freedom of speech and the press, saying,

This is the true Liberty, when free-born men
Having to advise the public may speak free,

and there is Christopher Smart, strangely twentieth-century-minded, urging,

Give prejudices to the wind,
And let's be patriots of mankind.

There is Elizabeth Barrett Browning denouncing the exploitation of children in eighteenth-century-England, and Byron fired with the ideal of liberty in Greece's cause; there is Wordsworth calling England "a fen of stagnant waters," and Santayana carying,

My heart rebels against my generation,
That talks of freedom and is slave to riches.

There are the patriotic and liberty-loving poems inspired by the American Revolution, and the indignant poetry of the anti-slavery crusade; there is the poignant and bitter verse of Langston Hughes, Margaret Walker and Claude McKay who speak of our own discrimination against the Negro. There is E. B. White's dramatically satirical "I Paint What I See" which tells of the Rivera-Rockefeller episode of the Radio City murals. And there is the appealing beauty and ghastly realism of "Pamphlet", by the Puerto Rican, Luis Munoz Marin:

I have broken the rainbow
against my heart
as one breaks a useless sword against a knee.
I have blown the clouds of rose colour and blood colour
beyond the farthest horizons.
I have drowned my dreams

in order to glut the dreams that sleep for me in the veins
of men who sweated and wept and raged
to season my coffee. . . .

The dream that sleeps in breasts stifled by tuberculosis
(A little air, a little sunshine!);

the dream that dreams in stomachs strangled by hunger
(A bit of bread, a bit of white bread!);

I am the pamphleteer of God,
God's agitator,
and I go with the mob of stars and hungry men
toward the great dawn, . . .

The editors do not contend that all the poetry of freedom has technical excellence, but they do point out that "all of it has the authentic ring of humanity, the burning desire to be not only inspiring but persuasive." And they feel that "there can be no higher function for a poet or writer than usefulness."

Even though the volume is admittedly not all-inclusive, it offers ample and thrilling reading for those who wish to immerse themselves in the poetic expression of man's eternal search for true liberty. Readers will have the heart-warming experience of meeting old friends, and also the stimulating one of discovering once unfamiliar poets who have shared and are sharing in preserving the "spiritual strength and dignity of mankind."

Bernardine A. Buehrer

The Church and the Status Quo

TOWARDS CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY. *By Sir Stafford Cripps.*
New York: Philosophical Library. 101 pp. \$2.00.

Now that Great Britain is in the hands of the Labor Government the war-time speeches of one of its leftist leaders who is, incidentally, a leader of the Church of England as well, assume increased importance.

In these papers Sir Stafford Cripps starts always from the point of view of the Church. This in itself is enough to make the book unique among the writings of modern statesmen.

Chapters on "The Task of the Church" and "The Church as a Leader" are strong arguments for the social gospel. The negative work of the church is to condemn evil, but the positive work, largely neglected, is to rebuild society in accord with Christian principles. Today the church "is not looked to as the burning and fanatical champion of the poor and of the oppressed, for it has settled down to an easy acceptance of 'society-as-it-is,'" and until it mends its ways it cannot hope to keep up with the march of civilization. For Cripps the true goal of the church is "the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth, the social salvation of our people and of the world."

The section on *Industry and Christianity* deals with government ownership of the means of production, now an extremely live issue in Britain. Here we find the philosophy behind government expropriation of mines and railroads. Cripps defines "two entirely different categories of private property." The first includes all the things required for "personal use and enjoyment," such as home, garden, furniture, and the like, "the possession of which does not affect the relationship of the individual to other individuals. The second category of property includes those items which alter the relationship between individuals by putting one person in the power of another. For the sake of Christian principles, this type of property should be handled by the state, the most impartial authority we have, provided always that the state is imbued with the Christian spirit.

This is enough to show the progressive economic ideas of the book and also the conservative Christian doctrine. Might not liberal theologians in our country produce as strong a social philosophy?

Felix Danford Lion

Pollysyllables for Commonplaces

THE THEORY OF CULTURE. By James Feibleman. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pierce. 361 pp. \$5.00.

Ontology is a word that numbs the mind. "Let's see, it has something to do with *being*; oh, yes, I remember reading something in college about somebody's ontological argument for the existence of God." Actually one cannot escape being ontological, any more than one can escape being human.

Ontology consists of the inescapable assumptions that go with existence, the determination of the real by an individual or a culture, subconsciously and consciously. Says this author, that determination springs from three basic human drives: feeding, breeding and inquiring. Of these three, inquiring is distinctively human, and he goes to a considerable extent to prove that inquiring is native. Well, from these drives one's ontology develops, and the ontology of a particular human culture. The author's term for this reality, which is the major *leit motif* of the book, is "implicit dominant ontology."

To have an implicit dominant ontology, it is only necessary to have been for some while a member of a social group The illiterate farmer or garage mechanic has his ontology The ignorant, devout citizen whose entire reason has been given over to faith in some prevalent organized church, and who is content with the explanation that everything that happens is the direct result of God's will, has his implicit dominant ontology as well The implicit dominant ontology of a social group is its subconsciously accepted metaphysics It is what Holmes has called the inarticulate major premise, (pp. 4, 75)

The explicit dominant ontology of James Feibleman's book is that a science of culture is possible. Human reason, he believes with ardor, can be as effective in the realm of the social sciences as it has been in the realm of the physical sciences; the methods of physical science can lend themselves to the study of sociology or culture. So the book is a grappling with the problem of bringing science to apply, an effort to set forth what a science of culture involves. Great learning, precept, example and highly original insight are brought to bear. There is interesting criticism of the efforts of other thinkers, especially Vico, Spengler and Toynbee, to determine the principles which govern human culture. There are re-definitions of ethnology, ethos, mythos, common-sense, *et al.* There are detailed examinations of early cultures, non-existent and existent, as well as provocative analyses of advanced cultures such as the English and the Chinese.

Like Plato, Feibleman believes that everything which comes into being may be measured, although he admits that it is difficult to measure such a thing as goodness in an extrinsic manner. As far as possible, therefore, the study is empirical. Following this approach levels of existence are established in hierarchical fashion, covering the whole realm of being from the physical to the social. It appears to be a reasonable arrangement. Laws deriving from relationships within and between these levels are stated tentatively. There is recognition of the depth of the roots supporting the tree of culture, going down into the subconscious.

The Hierarchy of Cultural Types

A stimulating part of the book deals with the types of culture generalized out of the mass of research and reading the author has completed. There are seven: the *infra-primitive*, which asks individual members, "How necessary are you to our survival?"; the *primitive*, which poses the question, "How communal are you?"; the *martial*, which asks, "How well do you obey?"; the *religious*, which asks the leading question, "How devout are you?"; the *civilized*, which queries, "How personal are your feelings?"; the *scientific*, which inquires, "How inquisitive are you?"; and the *ultra-scientific*, which never ceases asking, "How complete are you?" The comment is that actual cultures are, of course, mixtures of these types.

The purpose of the volume is to set forth the pre-requisites and methodology of a science of culture. This is clear. The reviewer is not competent to say that the purpose has been completely realized. He can say, however, that it has been striven toward. The author has tried "to find the invariable functions in a variable world of human culture," and he has tried hard. The book is worthy of slow, thoughtful study.

On page 174 it is stated that Spengler is a poet rather than a scientist, and the implication is that for this reason Spengler's work

should be judged accordingly. On the lesser ground of style it may be asserted as emphatically that Feibleman is not a poet. Unusual words and the unusual use of usual words frequently clutter up his meaning needlessly. And, like many another man writing about untrammelled territory, there is a tendency to use polysyllables for the utterance of commonplaces. I wonder if there has ever appeared an uglier paraphrase than this one: "Cultures work in mysterious ways their values to apprehend." (p. 200)

In general, however, the purport of the book and its manner of presentation are admirable. It is a noteworthy contribution to that small shelf of thick books relating to the rise and fall of human culture.

Harmon M. Gehr

The Shame of a Nation

AN AMERICAN DILEMMA. A study of the Negro problem and modern democracy. By Gunnar Myrdal. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1483 pp. \$6.00.

Sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation and published by Harpers, this is by all odds the most ambitious and comprehensive study of the Negro problem in America which has ever been undertaken.

Dr. Myrdal, as most readers will know before this review appears in print, is not an American. He is a native of Sweden who came directly from the University of Stockholm. That he brought to his work an objective mind, that he carried it forward with painstaking care, and that he concluded it with mature and balanced judgment is the most restrained tribute one can pay him.

The picture which our author paints is an astonishing and, in many respects, a terrifying one. There are thirteen million Negroes in America. They are our greatest and most discussed minority. Increasingly both whites and blacks are troubled by their common problem of living together. That the whites do not understand the Negro is a point which is emphasized again and again. Least of all do the southerners understand him despite their loud protestations. Southerners are aware of the Negro "as a patient is aware of the toothache", but they have never really attempted to establish communication with him. They have never tried seriously to understand his deeper thoughts and feelings. That he is a human being, hurt, frustrated and bewildered by their treatment of him, is a problem they never discuss either in their newspapers or their schoolrooms, or in their Christian pulpits, even.

Nor can it be said that the northern whites understand the Negro. There is, says Myrdal, an astonishingly wide gap between much brave talk about equality, and actual treatment of the Negro in

everyday human relationships. The North, too, segregates the Negro, and thereby makes real communication between whites and blacks practically impossible. To get fair and adequate reporting in the newspapers Negroes must publish their own, and white people do not read Negro newspapers. This is almost as true in New York and Chicago as it is in St. Louis and Dallas.

P.of. Myrdal's study is so crowded with statistics that one hardly knows where to begin or what to mention. More than half of America's farm population of thirty million people live in the South; but the South has only one-third of the farm land, and its value is considerably less than that. Moreover, one-third of our Negroes live on the farm, and more than half of these are tenants. Most of the tenants are sharecroppers. Only one out of seven Negro farmers owns his own farm, and its appraised value is less than half that of the white man's. A Negro farmer's tools and equipment will average less than a hundred dollars in value, whereas the white farmer's equipment is worth four times that amount. Two-fifths of the Negro farmers are really only wage laborers working for their white "superiors."

During and after World War One the great infiltration of Negro workers into the North presented a serious problem for both races. But it only underlined the sad plight of Negroes, for they were practically barred from employment in textile mills, shoe factories, furniture factories, sawmills, bakeries and innumerable other industries.

Contrary to popular opinion the professional Negro fares not better but worse by comparison. Most hospitals are not open to Negro internes or to nurses, and even the medical schools are on the whole carefully restricted. Moreover, Negroes in the professions must in most instances confine their specialty to their own people. Doctors, lawyers, insurance salesmen, merchants, teachers and ministers can rarely count on white people to be their clients, customers or constituents. Negro lawyers have an additional handicap in the fact that white lawyers can usually work more effectively for Negro clients than can the Negro lawyers themselves. Negro lawyers often, simply because of their being black, prejudice judges and juries against them. In 1930 there were only about 254,000 white-collar workers out of thirteen million Negroes, representing a proportion of one out of fifty. It can be assumed that with aid of the F.E.P.C. the proportion is now considerably larger; but that the discrepancy is still very great is also a certainty.

Two other problems must be mentioned. The white man has always lived with the easy assumption that the Negro is biologically inferior. Moreover, he has had statistical support in the fact that the Negro is sick oftener, has a shorter life-span, has more bodily infirmities, and suffers by comparison in over-all intelligence tests. Again, Negroes have more collisions with the law;

and they provide more than their population share of the inmates in penal institutions.

The answer is, of course, easy to find if one looks for it. Whereas, there are no statistics which reveal the comparative amount of crime committed by the two races, we do have statistics on arrests, convictions and imprisonment. Negroes are more likely to be apprehended for infractions of the law. In the South Negroes are seriously punished for crimes which, if committed by white men, might be completely overlooked. Nor is the North without guilt in the matter. A Negro may be a disturber of the peace by simply walking across the street which segregates him from the white man's domain. He endures more congested housing conditions, less police protection. White criminals often enjoy helpful influence with the judges and the police, immunizing them, as it were, against arrest for minor violations or against severe penalties for major crimes. Indeed, says Myrdal, a Negro's social and economic handicaps are so great it is a wonder his crime record is as low as it appears to be. In any event, the population statistics of penal institutions and the records of the police courts are completely unreliable in making comparisons.

Against white Americans, both North and South, Dr. Myrdal has presented a factual indictment which we dare not ignore. A devastating study in human relations, this book, nothing less!

Edwin T. Buehrer

"Polemical and Apologetical"

BEYOND DOUBT. By *Kenneth Patton*. Boston: The Boston Press. 184 pp. \$2.00.

The author of *Beyond Doubt* is not only an eloquent young preacher, he is also a philosopher of parts, a sensitive artist, a poet, and a well-grounded theologian. Such a combination should serve him well who undertakes to deal effectively with the proposition as set forth in the preface to the book, namely to counsel how "to build a new, world-wide faith for the human race, based on our clearer understanding of human beings and their history, on our advancing knowledge of the universe." That is a pretty big order, but Mr. Patton evidently has faith in himself and proceeds like a young Hercules to grapple with his Antaeus. There are times, it must be confessed, when this reviewer is not so sure that the author's Antaeus has been entirely disposed of.

It would be hardly fair to expect of any Unitarian parson, even the most brilliant, to settle the problem the author here sets forth. But that Patton does a fine job, no one will doubt. One hundred and eighty-four pages are hardly enough to dispose of the many

individual problems the author raises, but those that he does tackle he handles with a deftness and sureness that mark him as a man of keen insight, excellent philosophical training, and superior literary ability.

The title is likely to cause misunderstanding. After all, isn't it true that we "liberals" have a very particular affinity for "doubt"? Indeed, I am not at all sure that one can build a faith such as is here outlined without always having at hand the salt of skepticism, and the condiment of doubt. We may want to go "beyond doubt," but never too far, for faith and doubt in any intelligent *Lebensanschauung* are twins. They are, in fact, a kind of Siamese Twins; if you try to separate them, both will suffer, and this, I believe, the author realizes as he goes along.

He sets forth "Five General Principles" for the new faith, i.e. he pleads for a religion that is "natural, human, scientific, democratic, and artistic." That pretty well covers the field, and since the author is always so logical as well as emotionally balanced, I am quite willing to go along with him. But I would like to caution against any such phrases as "A Natural Religion" or "A Scientific Religion" etc. becoming just popular clichés. True, Patton attempts to define these terms; but he is not always successful in doing so in the sense, at least, that he often leaves me unsatisfied.

As for the chapters, *The Old Faith and the New* and, *Towards a New World*, these are done in the finest of liberal tradition. Religious liberalism is entering an era of increasing creative writing, both polemical and apologetical, and Patton's book combines both of these necessary strains. He attacks man's antiquated faith fearlessly, and sets forth the new faith boldly. More power to Kenneth Patton and to the spirit he serves so well!

Karl M. Chworowsky.

Books in Brief

LABOR FACT BOOK No. 7. *Prepared by the Labor Research Association.* New York: International Publishers. 208 pp. \$1.60.

Labor's report to the nation, issued every two years by Robert W. Dunn and a competent staff of statisticians and economists, is an indispensable handbook for anyone interested in the continuing history and struggle of the labor movement to achieve significance and maturity in our American life. A few chapter headings, mentioned without comment, are indicative of the scope and purpose of this book: Postwar Goals and Problems, Labor and Social Conditions, Farmers and Farm Programs, Labor in Other Countries, Unions and the Nation, Labor Relations and Boards, Trade Union Developments. The same personal library which is incomplete

without the World Almanac is incomplete without this additional link in labor's continuing reports. Factbook No. 8, due in 1947, promises to be another landmark.

DICTIONARY OF WORD ORIGINS. *Edited by Joseph T. Shipley.* New York: The Philosophical Library. 430 pp. \$5.00.

The history of words is an important chapter in the history of a people's culture. It "traces the path of human fellowship from mind to mind and from nation to nation." American speech comes from every nook and corner of the world, and from every century of recorded human history. Our language is as old as Babylon and as new as jive and the atom bomb; and our words have migrated up the rivers and sailed across the seven seas. By soldier, trader and priest have they been delivered to our dictionaries. Here is a book of word origins, telling briefly how much of this came about. It is far from complete, and leaves many wants unsatisfied; but it is a magnificent beginning of one of the most exciting tasks which modern scholarship has ever undertaken.

TOWARD A UNITED CHURCH. *By William Adams Brown.* New York: Charles Scribners' Sons. 264 pp. \$2.50.

This book, probably the last which Prof. Brown wrote, was an unfinished manuscript at the time of his death in December 1943. It was prepared for the printer by Dr. Samuel McCrae Cavert, a student and friend of many years, and now General Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches. It is an historical record of "Three Decades of Ecumenical Christianity." As such it contains reports of many conferences held in Edinburgh, Stockholm, Jerusalem, Oxford and Madras during that long stretch of years. The closing section contains a survey of "the future role of Christian ecumenicity." For those who are interested in the history and significance of this movement in Protestant Christianity, this book is necessary reading.

BRING HITHER THE TIMBREL. *By Harry Herschel Shapiro and Mildred Whitney Stillman.* Cornwall-on-Hudson, N. Y.: Idlewild Press. 153 pp. \$2.00.

For those who are interested in a carefully selected group of Psalms which through almost thirty centuries have retained their poetic beauty and power this book may be the answer. The editors have exercised complete freedom of selection—and rejection—even to the point of eliminating objectionable or repetitive verses, or of resorting to different translations. Poetic value for the modern reader was the sole criterion. The Psalms, moreover, are grouped under such intriguing titles as: Songs of Praise, God in Nature, God in History, The Good Ruler, The Good Citizen, etc. The result

is a modest little volume of ancient poetry which deserves a place among the best anthologies, whether ancient or modern.

BIBLE FOR THE LIBERAL. *Edited by Dagobert D. Runes.* Foreword by Lin Yu Tang. New York: Philosophical Library. 368 pp. \$3.50.

Here is another of the countless attempts to stimulate a popular appreciation of the Bible by the simple process of selection and condensation. It will, of course, not succeed; but those who continue to turn to the "Book of Books" will find here many of the historical and inspirational highlights of both Old and New Testaments. As usual there are glaring omissions. Precisely why Psalm 104, easily the loveliest of all nature Psalms, was left out only the editor himself will be able to explain. One gets the impression that this "Bible" was hastily compiled, and that it was a task which only a close-knit committee of experts in Biblical literature could ever hope adequately to perform.

ESSENCE OF HINDUISM. *By Swami Nikhilananda.* New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center. 91 pp. \$1.25.

The author of this book is a distinguished interpreter of Hinduism to America. He gives us here, as the format says, "a concise statement of the essential doctrines of a philosophical religion which for the past seven thousand years has animated and sustained one of the oldest cultures on earth." The book contains two lectures: the first, *Immortality*, was delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences; the second, *Faith for Today*, was given as a Town Hall lecture (New York City) back in 1941. The heart of the faith here taught is the oneness of the universe, the interdependence of man, and the need of a single ethical standard to serve as a norm for all human relationships.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE. *By Swami Nikhilananda.* New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center. 228 pp. \$2.00.

The translator and editor of this book, who has done much to introduce Americans to the culture and teachings of Hinduism, here gives us a short treatise of the philosophy of what in India is known as "Non-dualistic Vedanta", first preached and written some 2,700 or more years ago. The sublimely undogmatic nature of many of the meditations published here for the first time in English, is suggested by the following lines:

How can one circumambulate Him who is boundless in all directions?
 How contrive to salute Him who is One without a second?
 How can hymns be pleasing to That which the Vedas cannot reveal?
 Therefore it is that perfect knowers of Brahman, always and under
 all conditions,
 Commune with the Lord through contemplating their total identity
 with him.

Introducing Our Contributors

Gardner Williams is head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Toledo (Ohio) . . . **Richard B. Carleton** is minister of the First Congregational Church in Pittsfield, New Hampshire . . . **Ramon Sawyer Barth** is well known to all our readers for her dramatic portrayal of outstanding women of our modern world . . . **Robert L. Cope** wrote **Can Schweitzer Save us From Niebuhr?** while he was still a student at St. Lawrence University. He is now enrolled in the graduate school of Columbia University . . .

Kenneth L. Patton, who reviews Prof. Northrop's widely discussed book, is here himself under review by **Karl M. Chworowsky**. Mr. Chworowsky, formerly a Lutheran minister is now minister of the Flatbush Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, New York . . . **Bernardine A. Buehrer** is the editor's chief literary and typographical adviser. She is also a teacher of high school and college English . . . **Felix D. Lion** is a Unitarian minister in Dunkirk, New York . . . **Harmon M. Gehr**, our associate editor, needs no further introduction . . .

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